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THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM.

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Each member can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the Editor. Members will be careful to write on only one side of the paper and to use black ink.

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For paragraphs under the word "Ans." the editor is personally responsible.

April-May, 1890.

QUESTION XLVI.

What is meant by "inaudible muttering"? Does it mean the muttering of anything else than the word "Om"? What is the proper way to practice it?

Ans.—You have probably been reading Patanjali before you are ripe for him. Books written for a people of antipodal conceptions, thought, and diction are only comprehensible when one gets out of one's own habits and into theirs,—a thing possible but to few minds, and they of largest training. In no case is this truer than in Oriental works. Either in their deep and grave penetration, or in their allegorical or metaphorical expression, they are unintelligible to a Westerner who approaches them with the matter-of-fact, literal, superficial spirit of his race. There is the same incongruity between a Western mind perusing an Eastern book, as between a gentleman in English costume and the Moorish Mosque he is visiting. It is abundantly illustrated in the use made of the Bible. Literalness, we know, is eminently characteristic of children, who always take everything in its exact sense, allowing no play to

fancy or exaggeration ; and we of the West are racial children as compared with those old peoples of the Orient. Now when we (or most of us) read that, if a man smites us on the right cheek, we are to offer him the left too, or that, if one takes away our cloak, he is to have our coat also, the injunction seems preposterous and anything but "inspired". Exactly so when reading Patanjali. Until you get a touch of the Oriental spirit, some perception of the flavor of the man and his style, much he says will appear absurd, and some actually lunatic. Could anything be less suggestive of celestial aspiration than a human being engaged in contemplating his navel and in mumbling unintelligible words ?

That sound may give impulsion to enormous forces has been vaguely suspected by science and positively asserted by Occultism. Perhaps the "Open, Sesame" of the *Arabian Nights* may have had an arcane origin. The old story of the fiddler getting the key-note of a bridge and demonstrating his ability to fiddle the bridge down, may have more in it than legend. It is quite as conceivable that vocal inflections should arouse tumults in other regions, as that they should do so in the human heart. To be systematic, regulated, and precise, such effects must have vocal causes produced in accordance with exact knowledge and by trained practitioners. Given these, there may be as much potency in a few notes breathed towards the unseen world as we know there is in the calculated utterance of one line by an orator to men. All Occult works attribute enormous power to the word "Om" pronounced by rule, and it is natural that there should be others.

"But", you will urge, "the practice is said to be *inaudible*." "Inaudible" to whom ? Evidently to a listener. There must be *some* sound, or there could not be "muttering".

Whether there are other words in use than "Om", and exactly what inflection must be given to each, and precisely what effects are to follow the "muttering", and how much preliminary training is necessary before these secrets are imparted, are matters as unknown to the FORUM as to you. A child standing by a church organ may be told that there is a

note or a chord in that instrument which, if properly sounded, would shiver every glass in the building. Does he rationally expect to mount the seat and try? And so you, O literal interpreter of Oriental books and instantaneous experimenter in arcane formulæ, must abide many incarnations before the simplicity and ignorance of childhood shall be dispelled through the slow discipline of study and instruction. You must not expect to use the tools of an Initiate during the long time before you are yet a Chela. Meanwhile less recondite matters are available and salutary. Sinnett is better for you than Patanjali, and *The Key to Theosophy* more digestible than *The Secret Doctrine*. Waste no time on "mutterings", inaudible or otherwise, but clarify your thought and moderate your ambitions and thank the FORUM for its hint.

QUESTION XLVII.

In the answer of "F. L. M." to question No. 3 in the FORUM *in regard to "Meditation," the writer several times refers to the control of the "vital electric currents or agents of unconscious mind".*

By the latter term, I understand, is implied the inner consciousness or the Will force distinguished from mental effort, and also that the writer is able not only to recognize the physical expression of this force but also to control it.

We are conscious of mental effort, but usually the impulse of the Will produces no physical sensation of itself.

Many of us now groping in a boundless void could at least feel our way in the darkness, could we thus ascertain that our inner consciousness was indeed impressed and working in the direction of our convictions.

Let us have some elementary elucidation of this subject.

Can such consciousness be cultivated, and, if so, what are the initial steps?

W. Q. J.—The answer referred to was made by a student who had discovered that, as far as he was concerned, the vital currents could be centered upon desired parts of the body, and

that in his case, if they were centered in the head, he would be engaged more in mental works than bodily, and *vice versâ*. Proceeding with this, he found that some ailments could be thus driven away by centering his vital force upon the place where they existed. It is a form of will power, which to be used requires a well cultivated and balanced imagination. Much abused word as "imagination" is, it is the only one that will express the necessities of the case. If your imagination cannot make a *picture* of the spot and of the force, you can never—except by accident—cause the forces to flow there. Hence the initial step is to cultivate the interior image-making power. Unless this is done, the will in these planes can hardly be directed to its end, for with no image the forces have no place to focus upon; and it is a huge error to suppose that scientists are right in saying that imagination is a useless, although perhaps pleasant, power. As each human being is *sui generis*, has his own methods interiorly, peculiar to him and to no other, one should not look for hard and fast rules for all, but go to work upon himself, find himself out of whom he is most ignorant, and proceed upon the lines thereby indicated. All methods should be tried, and one's own processes of thought and feeling carefully observed. Without such inspection, rules and discussions are useless; by it—if truly pursued—anything can be discovered.

QUESTION XLVIII.

In carrying out the first principle of the T. S., to which all Fellows are bound, should we not aid such movements as tend in that direction,—for instance, the Nationalist Clubs, woman suffrage, labor organizations, etc.?

Ans.—If there was presented to any Theosophist a scheme for social melioration so simple, so obvious, so entirely free from complication with other matters, so void of all debateable or doubtful theories in political economy or social science that the assent of every intelligent thinker would at once be given to it, one may say that the Theosophist, like any one else,

should aid it. But it is by no means the case that a Theosophist, any more than other men, is bound to aid movements merely because they *claim* to advance Universal Brotherhood, and without any examination into their nature, or the theories implicated in them, or the consequences sure to follow, and also without his own conviction that the movement is salutary. That the Theosophist is pledged in advance to every organization provided only that its flag bears the term "Fraternity", is a doctrine of pure slavery to words.

The 3 movements cited are particularly good illustrations of the above because they are the constant subject of appeal to Theosophists as such, and because, also, their aims are savory to the fraternal instinct. But whether they actually do "tend in the direction" of practical realization of true Brotherhood is debateable, and the certainty cannot be quietly assumed, as is done in the Question. The FORUM pronounces no opinion whatever upon any one of them, but it may point out a few of the difficulties involved in each.

The Nationalist platform is based upon a theory in regard to the tenure of property, upon another in regard to the relations of the State to the individual, upon a third in regard to the true method of production, and upon a fourth in regard to human nature as a result of social arrangements. Each of these theories is a controverted, and therefore an unsettled, point in political economy; and each has bearings on social, governmental, commercial, and moral problems, very slightly understood, highly complicated, extremely far-reaching, and as to which the highest authorities are not agreed.

Woman suffrage first raises the disputed merit of universal suffrage, and then a series of questions, physical, physiological, domestic, and governmental. Here, again, not one can be said to be settled, and here, again, there has been too little experience for publicists to appeal to with confidence.

Labor organizations involve theorems as to the nature of capital, wages, and the like, as to the relative rights of intelligence and muscle, as to the laws of industrial development, and as to the exact effect of combinations and strikes. Good

and evil have both been exhibited in their history, and who has yet struck the balance? In this, as in the other two instances, there are ramifications in every direction, and the measure and results of these have not been determined.

Such are the facts. Whether each of the three movements cited is good or bad, or a mixture of good and bad,—and as to this, as has been said, the FORUM expresses, and can express, no opinion, it is certain that very grave and doubtful points are involved, and that there is no agreement of most competent thinkers on any one.

This being so, it is impossible to commit the Theosophical Society or Theosophists as such to their support. We have a distinct mission to uphold Theosophical doctrine and its central idea of Universal Fraternity, but we are not called upon to champion any particular method of its application, still less to pronounce judgment on questions of Political Economy and Social Science, of which we as Theosophists know no more than anybody else, and as to which there is no unity among the Professors themselves. One may perhaps with safety go even a step further. While it is not true that Theosophy produces indifferent citizens and lukewarm philanthropists, there is reason to think that it inclines believers, *at this stage of their work*, rather to the circulation of Theosophical ideas than to any specific mode of exemplifying them. A Theosophist, knowing that he has but a certain store of energy, may believe that he accomplishes more good in the end by impressing upon the age the doctrine of Karma, for instance, than by sustaining a Reform Club or a soup-house. His position may be that, by going at once to the root of evil and treating it, he may amend the human misdeeds which necessitate reforms and charities. Whether this position be correct or not, it certainly has some plausibility, and it acquits him of the charge that he is but a dreamy talker, indifferent to the actual needs of a practical age. But anyhow, the duty of Theosophists is to follow their best-formed convictions of duty. The Society has proclaimed a principle—Universal Fraternity—which is the basis of membership, but it cannot undertake to

say what particular scheme most truly embodies that principle, or that individual members are to hand over their judgments to the corporation.

QUESTION XLIX.

"Five Years of Theosophy" states there are 36 Tatwams. As Shiva Sanhita says, "From ether came air; from ether and air, fire; from ether, air, and fire, water; and from ether, air, fire, and water was produced the earth, all of them forming the Universe." Now, I cannot arrange the combination of these 5 tatwams so as to make 36. I make 5 primal tatwams, 10 double, 10 triple, 4 quadruple, 1 quintuple, or 30 in all. Can you supply the deficiency?

W. Q. J.—It has been generally understood that the study of the tatwas by beginners, including all men of every sort who are still in the world, is discouraged by the Masters of Occultism, since it may lead to abuses. Furthermore, the subject is so mixed up as far as any treatises on it are concerned, that it is well protected from enquiring minds. And as several Hindu writers will differ as to the number of tatwams, none of the writers at the same time being able to use any of them, or tell how to do so, one may be justified in leaving the matter untouched for the present. For my part I am willing to confess ignorance of any more than 4 of these forces, to wit, those of fire, air, earth, and water, and to assume but slight knowledge of those. Just here it is well be read on page 290, *Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, "So there are seven forces in man and in all nature."

QUESTION L.

Madame Blavatsky declares that a person may meet with "unmerited trials". (Key to Theosophy). How can this be? If the Law is absolutely just, how can it mete out to us anything but justice?

Ans.—Simply because, in a world of exceeding complexity, it is inconceivable that the merit and demerit of each man should be exactly balanced up at each moment of his life.

Look closely at this. If there can be no unmerited trials, neither can there be unmerited blessings. If a man commits a grave wrong and it is not punished till later, any intermediate blessing must be unmerited. Similarly as to a good deed. Hence the theory of the questioner requires that awards should follow *instantaneously* upon acts, and, as this must be so as much at one date as another, that it should always have been so. And from this flows the consequence that a man's condition at any moment exhibits exactly his merit or demerit at the preceding moment.

Now such is obviously not the fact. We can so convince ourselves by watching the career of any one prominent in the community or well known to us personally; or, better yet, by recalling our own. Was every evil deed punished, every good deed rewarded, the instant afterwards? Assuredly not. Sometimes the consequences did not become visible for years; in other cases they are still unmanifest.

Nor are the reasons obscure. A world in which right and wrong met with immediate reward would be a world managed solely for moral purposes. Nothing could happen to anybody which was not at the moment deserved. Ice so weak as to crush under the sinner would be strong enough to support the saint; railway accidents would pick out the undeserving on a train and spare the good; only reprobates would be drowned with their vessel; stocks which would go up for the benefit of the philanthropist must at the same time go down for the reproof of the monopolist; storms and floods and droughts and fires must visit the vicious, while skipping the adjacent territory of the righteous. Evidently in such a world there could be no physical law. There would be no connection between events or between phenomena, for the only connection would be between an event or a phenomenon and a moral condition in some particular man. Forces would not play equably or

regularly, but would rush zigzag in any direction as needed for disciplinary ends. Science and history and commerce and education would disappear at once.

Another reason is that, in the world as it actually exists, not only are physical laws no respecters of persons, but the operation of all forces is enormously complicated by the existence of a vast number of varied, changeable, and unregulated human wills. If all men were equally intelligent and equally conscientious, the course of things would be comparatively simple. But when there are millions of individuals, each more or less selfish, stupid, flighty, or whimsical, forces of opposite, jarring, and conflicting character must be constantly set in motion and constantly produce a discord which cannot affect only the causer. If A. "bears" the market, the ramified influences reach the virtuous I. who is ignorant and the meritorious T. who is timid; both sell out and lose, thus suffering an "unmerited trial", while the covetous A, who ought to have a merited trial, amasses wealth. Nor could this be otherwise, for in the vast and complex net-work of agencies constituting social organism and started by impulses from different hands and different motives, all individuals are enmeshed, and accidents and evils must inevitably occur.

Still another reason is that a system of evolution in character precludes the turning of men into automata. If all men treated each other according to exact desert, it must be either because all have reached the stage of entire illumination of truth and entire consecration to right, or because all, whatever their desires, are constrained by external powers to act thus judicially. But we know that the former alternative is not the fact, and we can see that the latter would make an automaton of every one, would destroy all moral responsibility and growth, and therefore cannot be a fact. Yet if neither is true, it of necessity follows that there must be occasional injustices and wrongs,—"unmerited trials", in other words.

This does not in the least conflict with the law of Karma. It has never been held that Justice vindicates itself immediately, but only that it vindicates itself inexorably. Long time

may pass, incarnations even, before a deed receives its appropriate reward. It is certainty, not instantaneity, for which we must look. The scales cannot be balanced at each successive moment. There is an approximation to justice always, but absolute precision is only to be found in the totality of incarnations.

Moreover. it is to be remembered that Devachan provides some remedy for "unmerited trials". As a spiritual condition it is more real than the illusory condition on earth, and we can easily conceive that it contains resources of compensation quite as copious as any here. When we add to these the possibilities in a later incarnation, no one need fear that any temporary loss will not be amply made up to him. The Law does not sleep, has full means of vindication, and never fails.

QUESTION LI.

Can we find the God in ourselves before we have realized the Divine Life outside of us?

Ans.—The history of religious thought on its way from savage to civilized surroundings shows that it begins from the outside and is transformed from a terror of external Nature to a harmony with internal Deity. To a savage every startling action of Nature—thunder, eclipse, comets, earthquake, &c.—is supposed the exhibition of anger in a god, and is to be averted by propitiations and sacrifice. As such phenomena recur and are investigated, the expanding mind perceives them as the subject of Law, and the acme of the process is reached when developing science has brought them within the realm of prediction. When a phenomenon may be accurately foretold, it has passed forever away from the region of mere Divine will, and has become part of the grand system which expresses in its totality the Divine conception. Along with this process goes examination of the gentler processes of Nature, the seasons, the crops, the instincts to domestic life, and the like. Ingenuity gradually appropriates Nature's

treasures and forces to the service of man, and the marvellous provision for his needs links a sense of the Divine goodness to a sense of the Divine wisdom. As intellect expands it criticises beliefs hitherto held sacred, and the now-aroused moral sense unites with it to weaken, and later to dethrone, all conceptions of Deity which were revolting, inhumane, or even unworthy. Love having been found the noblest element in humanity, it is perceived to be the most God-like, and so the God of the highest religious and secular civilization, originally a petty, malignant, cruel, and jealous tyrant, has become an Omniscient and Omnipresent Father. The starting-point and the goal of religious intelligence may be expressed in two passages from the Bible,—"The *fear* of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom", and "Love is the fulfilling of the law."

The line of individual development is parallel. Our earliest impressions come to us through physical sensation. Later on, when enlarging powers enable us to analyze, to collate, and to group the experiences incurred in a world of matter, we have a larger sense of the richness of that world and of the human emotions manifesting through it. In proportion as these are fine and elevated comes a perception that they are from above; and, indeed, the chief method to a concept of God is the uniting together the highest attributes of humanity, and then raising each to an infinite power. As is seen the beauty of impartiality, justice, benevolence, self-abnegation, wisdom, calmness, perseverance, and other traits, the soul mounts above the region of low or sordid action, and enters that of rarefied motive, spiritual and pure. These are the qualities of Godhood, and if it reflects them, sympathizes with them, delights in them, it has found the God within it.

It is difficult to imagine how we can find the God within us without first realizing the qualities which give us any idea of God, or how we can realize them without first seeing and recognizing them in action around,—action in Nature, action in Man. In each the better must upon the whole be dominant. If there were more droughts than fruitful seasons, more pestilence than health, mankind would perish from the earth:

if there was more human cruelty than love, more aggressiveness than conservatism, the race would be extinguished. This, with other considerations, leads to the conviction that at the summit of all Being must be perfection, not a force, not an abstraction, not a phrase, but a reality. But if a reality, then its omnipresent nature must bring it within us, and, because a reality and not an abstraction or a phrase, it may be felt. Thus a perception of the Divine Life outside of us leads to a belief in Divinity, and, as Divinity cannot be localized or restricted, it must pervade us; and if the quality of that Divine Life is realized, and if to this is added recognition of the truth that the human soul is the great sphere of its manifestation,—a sphere more worthy of it than any material world or system, we mount to a consciousness of God in Man, immanent, perceptible, transforming.

And so the FORUM would answer to the question, No.

W. Q. J.—But I would like to add, that as there is no such possibility as *divine life outside of us*, for all, heaven, earth, hell and God, are within, the question cannot be answered by either Yes or No.

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